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Partisan Politics for CIA, Too?

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. STEVEN B. DEROUNIAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 1963

Mr. DEROUNIAN. Mr. Speaker, whether or not the U.S. Intelligence Agency is to blame for our supposed lack of information is not quite clear. I have the feeling, however, that it has been made the whipping boy, because information it has passed along has not reached the President.

Now President Kennedy has replaced an outstanding scientist, Dr. James R. Killian, as chairman of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, with Clark Clifford, who has been high in Democratic politics since Truman days. This, of course, he has a right to do, but I am wondering whether or not this type of appointment is objective enough to correct whatever deficiencies there might be in such an important agency as CIA.

In last Monday's New York Times an excellent editorial points to this "political" appointment.

The editorial follows:

[From the New York Times, Apr. 29, 1963]

CLOUDY INTELLIGENCE

Are U.S. intelligence estimates being colored or distorted by policy?

The differences between President Kennedy and Senator KEATING about how many Soviet troops are in Cuba could reflect a serious weakness in the elaborate apparatus the Nation maintains for collecting and evaluating the data on which policy must be built.

The problem is not new to this administration, nor did it originate with the Cuban crisis. But when intelligence becomes, as it has become today, the very cornerstone of policy, an almost superhuman objectivity is required on the part of our intelligence chiefs if their estimates and evaluations followed by [illegible] intelligence, if it is to be worth [illegible] must be completely nonpartisan.

A Senate subcommittee, which has been quietly investigating the Cuban crisis, has already found considerable evidence that the initial estimates of last summer and fall were swayed to the "it can't happen here" atmosphere, then prevalent in Washington. The belief of all the Nation's top Soviet experts that Premier Khrushchev would never risk installing Russian missiles in Cuba appears to have influenced most of the intelligence judgments that reached the President in that period. The awakening led to a concentration on missiles only, that caused us to downgrade the significance of the small Soviet force that had been sent to Cuba.

Today the basic differences between the President and his critics concern the size of this force, and whether it is being reduced. Both [illegible] and Senator KEATING are getting their information from the same sources—Government intelligence agencies. So, because Cuba has become a partisan issue, it is too easy for the top-level estimates that reach the President to remain completely objective. The men who provide these judgments are appointees of the President's own administration. Given the present centralization of intelligence activities, it is especially hard for minority views, which might happen to be right, to reach the top.

This problem will not be helped by the appointment of Clark M. Clifford to replace Dr. James R. Killian, chairman of the board of directors of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as Chairman of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. The Board was established as a result of a recommendation of the Hoover Commission in 1956 to monitor continuously CIA and other intelligence activities.

Mr. Clifford has a brilliant mind, but, as a long-time troubleshooter for the Democratic Party, he is inextricably associated with partisan politics. He replaces a skilled and objective scientist-administrator. The selection is at best unfortunate. It is bound to give the impression that our intelligence activities will now be monitored not by a chairman who is an expert in the field, but by one who is essentially a politician.

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